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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(RELEASE-ON-RECEIPT)

SUBJECT: "An A for Asparagus"-information from canning specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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For many of you...the canning season starts with the A that stands for asparagus. And canning specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say the best start for canning asparagus is an early one...particularly if you have an asparagus patch in your garden.

Insure your canned asparagus for quality by starting early in the morning. Cut the tender, young shoots about two inches below the ground and speed them on their way to the pressure canner...through the trimming...the washing...the pre-cooking...and the processing...into the hot clean jars. An early start and a speedy finish...or two hours from the garden to the can...that's the rule for a quality product when you can asparagus at home.

Since asparagus grows rapidly in warm weather and needs to be cut every day...you're likely to have a small batch for canning every day.

Getting asparagus ready to can is pretty much like getting it ready to cook. That is...you need to wash it thoroughly and trim it carefully. Cold running water is a quick way to get the sand off. In trimming the scales, make sure you get all of them off. There may be pockets for dirt and bacteria that will cause spoilage later if scales remain on the shoots.

Whether you cut the asparagus stalks in inch pieces or can them whole...the rule for pre-cooking is the same...two or three minutes in boiling water. Next step is to pack the asparagus in clean, hot jars, cover with the hot cooking liquid...and add a teaspoon of salt to each quart. In packing, be sure to leave a headspace at the top of the jars.

Then the asparagus is ready for the pressure canner. Since asparagus is a non-acid vegetable...it may be canned safely only if you use a pressure canner. It needs to be processed at ten pounds pressure long enough so that all of the stalks are heated through. The time recommended by canning specialists for pint jars is thirty-five minutes at ten pounds pressure. For quart jars of asparagus, the specialists advise processing forty minutes at ten pounds pressure.

4-11-45

